



# RNZ, 2020y

NEW ZEALAND (/NEWS/NATIONAL) / COVID

## Covid-19: Lack of testing of staff at border 'extraordinary' - Skegg

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The lack of testing of staff at the border is extraordinary, a prominent epidemiologist says.



Photo: Supplied / Air New Zealand

Health officials are frantically trying to trace the origin of the Covid-19 cluster in Auckland, which could have come from the border.

Otago University Professor Sir David Skegg told *Morning Report* reports show more than 60 percent of staff working at the border have never been tested.

"I was really shocked to hear the Director-General of Health say a week or two ago that they were aiming to test people [border workers] every two or three weeks, every two or three weeks frankly would be quite inadequate.

Skegg said we have let ourselves down with complacency and "we've acted as if we're bullet proof".

"Complacency is one of our national characteristics, sadly."

He said the alert level change will depend on where the new cases are revealed today.

"I'd be very surprised if the current restrictions aren't at least continued, if not increased," he said.

He said security needs to be ramped up at the border to detect any Covid cases as soon as possible.

New Zealand also needs to ensure that sufficient masks are available and to ramp up contact tracing, he said.

**If you have [symptoms \(https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/412497/covid-19-symptoms-what-they-are-and-how-they-make-you-feel\)](https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/412497/covid-19-symptoms-what-they-are-and-how-they-make-you-feel) of the coronavirus, call the NZ Covid-19 Healthline on 0800 358 5453 (+64 9 358 5453 for international SIMs) or call your GP - don't show up at a medical centre**

Skegg said everyone should be downloading the contract tracing app, which is a long way from perfect but the best New Zealand has.

It is vital for the whole country to use the same QR code which fits with the government's app and shops should get rid of any that are non-compliant, Skegg said.

He said people should be wearing masks if they are going to be in indoor locations where they are going to be close to other people because it has been known for some time that masks are effective in hampering Covid's spread.

He said New Zealand has enjoyed a period of normality which is exceptional around the world and hopefully the country will learn from this mistake and get over it very quickly.